1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17



783 We were told never to forget these women, and we make these gifts to them so that they will say a kind word for us.' Their oath is made by the moon or sun. After death they believe they 775 go to the east, and claim that a man killed in battle is better treated, better liked, in the hereafter than one who dies of disease. They cling tenaciously to their old beliefs, customs and 186 habits, and though they have adopted some of the manners of the Sioux and their own allies, the Arickarees and Gros Ventres, they are bitterly opposed to the ways of the whites. . .

197 **Language Different from Sioux.** In speaking of their language Mr. Mitchell says: 'I always contended that Mr. Gallatin was in error in supposing the Mandans and Sioux descended from the same stock. Mr. Kipp, who has been well acquainted with both tribes for upward of thirty years, and speaks both languages with great fluency and correctness, fully concurs with me in opinion. There are a few words that are somewhat similar in sound, but this Mr. Kipp accounts for by the fact of the Sioux and Mandans having been neighbors from time immemorable, and during intervals of peace visiting and intermarrying with each other.' Many of them now speak the Sioux language, and though I consider their vocal language as distinct and different from all others, still high authorities at present class it with the Sioux; that is, being with the same stock." (P. 242.)

From the "Collections of the American Antiquarian Society," Vol. II (Cambridge, 1836), we quote the following concerning the Mandans, in which they are spoken of as one of three tribes of the Minnetarees. What is said therein concerning the chief Big White and the Welsh theory will receive consideration later on.

"The Minetares (Minetaree and Minetaries) consist of three tribes, speaking three different languages which belong to a common stock. Its affinities with the Dahcota are but remote, but have appeared sufficient to entitle them to be considered as of the same family.

● 185 "Two of those tribes, the Mandans, whose numbers do not exceed fifteen hundred, and the stationary Minetaries, amounting to three thousand souls, including those called Annahwas, cultivate the soil and live in villages situated on or near the Missouri, between the forty-seventh and forty-eighth degrees of north latitude. They are kept in a state of perpetual alarm by the Assiniboines, the Tetons, the Rapid Indians and other erratic

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tribes, and have on that account often been obliged to change the seat of their villages.

"Yet they have often been quarreling with the Ricaras, who like them are agricultural people; and they often make predatory expeditions against the Shoshones, in the eastern valleys of the Rocky mountains. Both the Mandans and the Minnetaries consider themselves as natives of that part of the country.

"The tradition of the Mandans is that they came from under ground by means of a great vine, which, breaking under the weight of some of them, has left behind a part of their nation, whom they expect to join after death. The color of the chief who visited Washington appeared less dark than that of our Indians, and he was the only full-breed Indian ever seen by me, whose eyes were of a bluish cast. It is believed that this is the tribe, often spoken of as White Indians, and which gave rise to the fabulous account of a tribe descended from the Welsh and speaking their language, a tale which the knowledge we have now acquired of the various Indian nations and of their dialects has set at rest.

"The vocabulary of the stationary Minetaries and the specimen of the Crow of Upsaroka dialect were obtained by Dr. Say. We knew from Lewis and Clarke that the Mandans spoke a kindred dialect, and this has been confirmed by the significant names of their chiefs, subscribed to a treaty with the United States. Lewis and Clark appear to have considered the Rapid, Fall or Paunch Indians, sometimes also called the "Minetaries of the Prairies," as belonging to the same family. But all the subsequent accounts agree in assigning to them an entirely distinct language." (P. 125.)

The above reference to the "chief who visited Washington" (Big White) is from Albert Gallatin.

We will here refer to the note by Dr. DeLorme W. Robinson on the Mandans, found among his notes on "Historical Sketch of North and South Dakota," by Dr. William M. Blackburn, in Hist. Coll., S. D., Vol. I, page 98, being a very concise and creditable summary of the tribe. In that note Dr. Robinson affirms that "their traditions give their former abode as being about the headwaters of Lake Winnipeg. It is probable that they were driven from their homes at Lake Winnipeg about 1680 by the Crees and Assiniboines, both powerful tribes which about this period came into possession of firearms. Their first stopping place, after being driven out by their enemies, was on the Mis-

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

# PREFACE

185 THE Mandan Indians are one of the famous agricultural tribes of the Missouri Valley region. When first visited by white traders during the early part of the eighteenth century, they lived in large fortified villages of permanent lodges overlooking the wooded bottomlands of the Missouri River where they planted their gardens. Evidence of their traditional southeastern origin is indicated by the many ancient village sites downstream from the mouth of Heart River in North Dakota. This evidence of downstream origin is further strengthened by cultural features of unquestionable early southeastern origin which survived in this northern region dominated by the buffalo-hunting economy.

And though the specialist will recognize numerous traits in the Mandan culture—peace and war chiefs, clans and moiety divisions, village squares and ceremonial centers, high villages dominating ceremonial activities, confederacies of the Mandan with other co-operating tribal and village groups, agricultural complexes of rites and practices, and many material culture traits—to be characteristic of the southeastern Mississippian cultures, these survivals were heavily overlain by recently borrowed traits more characteristically either Woodlands or Plains. These survivals of an earlier downstream culture, Woodlands traits reflected in certain ceremonial practices and pottery traits, and Plains traits reflected in the importance of the vision quest, buffalo-hunting and eagle-trapping economies, and large summer tribal ceremonials, combine to give the Mandan distinctive cultural characteristics.

Here on the banks of the Missouri River the aboriginal Mandan Indians lived in a rude but productive harmony with nature. Their villages were important trading centers where all the nomadic tribes of the Northern Plains met annually to trade for corn and other agricultural products. And the fur-trader found their villages strategically situated for bartering his goods

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for furs. But Mandan sedentary life proved ill adapted to cope with the epidemics of smallpox and other contagious diseases that soon swept through their villages in successive waves until the tribe narrowly escaped extinction in 1837. During this period of rapidly reducing population, increased pressure from newly arrived and well-armed Siouan nomadic tribes hastened the downfall of the Mandan and all other agricultural village Indians living along the Missouri River.

The Mandan were a conservative people; behavior was traditional and stemmed from institutional sources, the sacred rites, and ceremonies. If you ask an old Mandan to describe a commonplace custom or even a tool used in his daily activities, he will invariably first introduce data on its origin to explain its adoption and use by his people. Those possessing vast knowledge of these "origin myths" occupy high status positions in the village and tribe. Early in this study it became evident that no adequate understanding of Mandan cultural and social values was possible except in terms of these origin myths, most of which were inseparable parts of the various sacred-bundle complexes. In recording the data contained in this report, I encouraged informants to express in their own way meanings which customs had for them; and this report is an attempt to describe Mandan culture in terms of its meaning to the Mandan Indians.

So far as possible, considering overlapping of myths and bundle rites, I have attempted to bring the related sacred myth and descriptions of the rituals together in the same chapter. Though these sacred myths provide the student of Indian folklore with a new body of materials not heretofore available, I believe that their greatest value will be to provide a better understanding of Mandan habits, customs, ideologies, institutions, social values, and human controls. In describing Mandan culture, I have endeavored (1) to penetrate the veneer of European culture and to describe life as it was in aboriginal times and (2) to indicate recent cultural changes which have occurred under the impact of the fur trade and closer associations with the Hidatsa.

It is a privilege to express my thanks to the many persons who have helped me in the preparation of this book—all of

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# HISTORIC BACKGROUND

UNLIKE most tribes of the Northern Plains, the Mandan have moved little since first mentioned in the accounts of travelers, and their basic culture has changed little except for minor adjustments in their economy resulting from the introduction of the horse and European trade goods. The prominent part played by agriculture and the size and concentration of their villages at and above the mouth of the Heart River in early historic times, the semisedentary nature of their population, and their comparatively richer material wealth distinguished them from the nomadic buffalo hunters when European explorers first reached the Northern Plains. During late prehistoric times the Mandan were in intimate contacts with the Awatixa and Awaxawi bands of semisedentary Hidatsa, whose villages were situated below the Knife River at this time. So far as the writer was able to determine, the Mandan have always remained on friendly terms with the various Hidatsa and Crow groups.

Their first contacts were with the French coming overland from the Lake Winnipeg region to trade shortly after A.D. 1700, for La Harpe in A.D. 1719 gave the location of the Arikara on the Missouri as one hundred and twenty leagues southeast from "seven famous villages," which would, from the location of the Arikara in the La Harpe map, place the Mandan near the mouth of the Heart River.[1] We cannot be certain that the "seven famous villages" referred to by La Harpe do not include both the Mandan and at least part of the Hidatsa villages, since the Hidatsa are not mentioned in the literature until 1797, when they were identified by David Thompson as a separate linguistic group.[2] La Verendrye, who visited the earth-lodge vil-

1. Bernard de la Harpe, "Relation du voyage de Bernard de la Harpe," in Pierre Margry (ed.), *Découvertes et établissements des Française dans l'ouest et dans le sud de l'Amérique septentrionale, 1614–1754*, Sixième partie (Paris, 1886), pp. 292–93.

2. *David Thompson's Narrative of His Explorations in Western America, 1784–1812*, ed. J. B. Tyrrell (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1916), pp. 209–42.

9:Bruner E-5 (1951-1953) 1956
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indirect effect of contact resulted in the displacement of Eastern tribes, the formation of full Plains equestrian nomadism, and constant raids by hostile groups. These momentous events precipitated radical changes in the cultures of all Plains-Prairie peoples, and the Mandan-Hidatsa were no exception, although they did change less than other earth-lodge tribes (Strong 1940; Jablow 1950; Eggan 1952; Krieger 1953).

Indian culture today includes automobiles, farm equipment, washing machines, radios, and other material objects of American culture. Clothing and household goods are generally purchased through Western mail order catalogs. The major sources of cash income are the cattle business, agricultural enterprises, leasing lands to whites, wage work, and relief money. Every adult has attended government or missionary schools, and Catholic and Congregational Churches are established in the village. Thirty-one of the sixty-four males over seventeen years of age have had military experience.

Lone Hill village has never been a closed, self-sufficient society, from the time it was founded in the last decade of the nineteenth century with the allotment program of the Indian Bureau until the present. Today every adult deals with white people who reside outside the community, although contact is limited. The Indian's cash income and the education of his children are controlled in part by the Indian Bureau and by forces in the larger American society. Agency personnel, government employees, missionaries, day school teachers, traveling salesmen and local tradespeople, farmers and ranchers, visit with Indians both on and off the reservation. The resident of Lone Hill village buys goods from white storekeepers, attends schools taught by whites, transacts business with white government people, and often seeks wage work from nearby whites. The Indian must satisfy specialized needs through the services of white doctors, lawyers and professional people.

Despite the many American elements which have been adopted, Hidatsa is the major spoken language in Lone Hill today, secular Indian ceremonial dances are performed, and the social organization includes matrilineal clans and a Crow type kinship system. Sacred bundles are highly respected, Indian doctors utilize native medicine to cure the sick, and distinctively Indian values are manifest on many occasions. The linguistic, religious, and social patterns are not considered here as isolated survivals persisting intact from the aboriginal past, for they too have changed from older times as a consequence of changing conditions of life; and they function in a very different total situation in 1950 as compared with 1850 or 1750.

Viewed historically, contemporary Indian culture is mixed. It consists of automobiles from Detroit, dances from the Cheyenne, medicine bundles from the Mandan, and a language from the Hidatsa. From the perspective of some individuals who share it, this mixed culture is perfectly consistent. No person in Lone Hill today knows how to stalk buffalo, scalp a Sioux, or shape a stone arrowhead. With the exception of a few very old people, no one in Lone Hill has ever lived in a culture in which these activities were performed. Our task is to understand how groups of individuals in Lone Hill come to regard and participate in that historically mixed but contemporary functioning Indian culture.

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177 white, would be favorably predisposed toward white ways. But the descend-
121 ants of the previously mentioned Irishman are biologically part white, yet they remain unacculturated; and there are three families who have had a white model but who have not become acculturated. Another possible explanation is that the lighter skin color per se allows the children of mixed marriages to "pass" in local white society. The data does not confirm this notion either, as an Indian's ability to be accepted by local whites depends upon how he behaves rather than upon his racial characteristics. A series of relevant factors in the total situation, when taken together, do give at least partial understanding of the importance of white intermarriage. They add up to a picture of such extreme psychological and social isolation of the Indian people that a white person married into the family becomes the primary agent by which white ways and values are learned and internalized.

131 Lone Hill is physically isolated between the Missouri and the Little Mis-
177 souri rivers, and contact with white people is thus infrequent and limited. There are no stores, no paved roads, and no post office in the village. The
[36] only whites who reside in Lone Hill itself are the two teachers in the govern-
487 ment grade school, who rarely participate in community affairs. None of the
489 whites currently married to Indians live permanently in the village today, although a few couples occasionally return to Lone Hill, during which time they stay with Indian families. There are two ways to travel to the surrounding towns: either across the Missouri River by boat during the summer and over the ice in winter, or by making a sixty-mile trip over dirt roads through irregular rolling hills and flat-topped buttes. Anyone who has lived in Lone Hill during the late spring comes to realize the meaning of isolation. The ice over the river is too thin for passage, the roads become blocked by mud and melting show, and the one telephone usually breaks down and remains unrepaired. Mail and supplies are often dropped by airplane. The physical isolation works in a double way—few whites come to Lone Hill and few Indians leave.

105 The Mandan-Hidatsa have never experienced a serious ecological read-
177 justment, as they have lived along the Missouri River Valley for at least the two centuries preceding the completion of this study in 1953. The Indian people today are certainly dependent upon the American economic system for their cash income, but almost every family in Lone Hill derives a relatively large noncash income from exploitation of the natural resources of the area. This exploitation is similar in some respects to the adjustment made by the aboriginal earth lodge tribes to the same fertile river bottom lands. Fuel is provided by wood from the timber, and from indigenous lignite outcroppings. Over half the families live in log cabins, which they erect themselves from timber found in the wooded bottoms. The food staples of corn and potatoes are obtained in part from small garden plots, now jointly worked by the men and women of the household. The meat supply depends largely upon the man's ability as a hunter of deer and small game. Abundant wild fruits and berries are gathered during the appropriate seasons and are preserved for use during the winter months. Thus, many of the economic goods which are normally

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purchased with cash income derived from productive employment are obtained by the people of Lone Hill directly from natural sources.

The paternalistic policy of the Indian Bureau has probably been more effective than the geographical isolation and the ecological setting in limiting direct social relationships between the Indian people and surrounding whites. Most of the necessary economic, educational, and welfare activities are handled by the Agency staff instead of by the Indian people. What is called paternalism arose from the necessities of an earlier historical period, during which it was a humane and just policy to aid those Indian people whose life pattern had been disrupted by American expansion. The people of Lone Hill still expect this protection today, yet they resent the associated dependency. At Fort Berthold and on other Indian reservations, this has come to be one of the most complex and pressing problems of native administration. Given the problems that exist, the current Bureau policy of withdrawal is far from an adequate solution. In a paper of this scope we can do no more than call attention to the importance of the administration as an isolating barrier between the Mandan-Hidatsa and the larger American society.

What is possibly the most important isolating factor stems from the sharp discontinuity in the unacculturated Indian life career. From the point of view of the age grading of the learning process, acculturative influences are operative primarily in the adult years. During the early formative period the unacculturated child comes to internalize Indian ways from an intimate group of close relatives in a permissive and secure atmosphere. Before he attends school the child eats Indian food, attends the ceremonial dances, and hears about the daring exploits of the Stone Hammer Society from his old grandfather. The activities of the outside world are dim and vague to the Indian child, for he rarely leaves the village and has few opportunities for direct contact with whites. He does attend an occasional movie and he listens to the radio, but the child has had no context within his own experience with which to relate these impersonal mass media. Those whites who come to Lone Hill on business deal with the adults and rarely see the children. I recorded three life histories of young adults who knew no white people until they were seven or eight years of age.

From the unacculturated child's point of view, life in Lone Hill revolves around his family, peer, and residential groups. His main satisfactions are obtained from within these groups, and the activities of their members, most of whom are relatives, form the major topics of conversation. That kinship is widely extended among the Mandan-Hidatsa takes on added meaning in this context, as all of an unacculturated Indian's emotionally charged and rewarding experiences occur within, and are shared by, the kinship group. Members of the kinship group are also the agents of cultural transmission, and from them the child learns the approved norms of conduct and patterns of social relations.

The unacculturated Indian child soon learns that his emotional security and his very identity are dependent upon his maintaining good relationships with his kinsmen. He does not derive security from acts designed merely to